Special Education Students in the Regular Ed. Classroom

Slide 01--0 minutes
Special Education Students in the Regular Classroom
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Well, you are a new teacher in Texas. You are a diverse group of students with multi-faceted needs, and you may ask yourself "Why do I need to be concerned with students who have special needs?". "What do I do to help all my students?". This module will provide the reasons why we must consider all students needs in our classrooms today. Also, of utmost importance, this module will address attitudes in general best practices and strategies to meet all the needs of all of our students. So, let's begin.

Slide 2--0 minutes .48 seconds
In the past, Special Education and General Education have had different perspectives concerning the education of students. For example, look at philosophy. In the past, general educators saw themselves as a factory worker. I have this part to put on, and so forth and so on, the general educator may say "I provided the needed instruction, the student's need to come prepared for grade level work". While the special educator looked at the student first. Today the general educator in this area is more like the special educator. In a term that we are going to be discussing through this module, differentiation is what that is all about.

So let's look at priority, notice there in blue. Today the priority is combined. Teacher's are asked to deliver content, this is the job all teachers are asked. It's one of the most important jobs. We should deliver content. But now, we deliver content well with individual differences in mind. That is the change.

So let's look at our work today. Special educators in this area are no longer islands to ourselves. We work in teams, more so than we ever have, to meet the needs of our children. Because the needs are so great, and so diverse. And we've learned that we are better when we work together. In the end we have learned that all education is special.

Slide 3--2 minutes .37 seconds
A Major difference between Special Education and General Education revolves around labeling. In Special Education, there is a label. This is associated with services and IEPs are individualized education plans, which direct how we teach and what we do with students who have special needs. The inclusion movements first goal was to place students with disabilities first, over any labeling or placements, often called person before disability thinking. We will discuss that, as well, later on.

Slide 4--3 minutes .28 seconds
So let's learn about the Inclusion Movement and its influence in our schools today. When you hear inclusion what comes to mind? Right now, if you can find a scrap sheet of paper. Write down what comes into your mind about inclusion. I'll give you a few seconds to do that. There's a reason for this, go ahead, do it.

Well, if you haven't done this by now, go ahead and pause me, but if so, if you've written down your thought on inclusion, I'm asking what was it? What is it? Did you have a positive, negative, or neutral thought? Hold onto this as we continue on...
So inclusion, what is it? Well it's been defined as a belief system shared by every member of a school as a learning community, often based on a mission statement or vision, emphasizing the commitment to educate all students so they can reach their potential.

So let's face it, this is why we became teachers. We want to see the betterment of the individual regardless. The heart of a teacher is to see students succeed to their full potential. So in other words, let's treat others with respect the way we would want to be treated, thus the golden rule, even in education.

The greatest challenges in inclusion are social in nature. We all know that real learning is social. We know that from our first philosophy classes in education, in our theory class's. In the real world, people work to accomplish objectives and missions in teams. In these teams, people develop relationships which help meet the demands of a challenge or goal. I would like you to go to the two internet sites I have listed on this slide. One of them is called "The Path to Inclusion" and the other one is "The Circle of Friends". You may use the word document that I've placed with this module. The title of this document "Word documents link page". You'll find slide 6(it's easy to find on the sheet because it's the first one's there). So basically while you're looking at these two internet sites, one called the "Path to Inclusion" and the other is "Circle of friends", I do want you to ask yourself this question. How can Circle of Friends help meet this challenge that we are talking about? This social relationship challenge.

Alright, here is the first website "The Path to Inclusion" by Barbara Pallis. You can see right here that there's a lot about a high school campus, group of teenagers, and so forth, eating, walking together, those are the first words. So look at that, and then as you go further down, you should be able to see "Circle of Friends" and you'll see comments related to that.

This is the next website, this is the Circle of Friends.org, and you have several videos here, and several stories, and videos that you can ponder. Take a look at some of these, and tell me what you think. You might want to pause right now as you do that, and then you can start up again and we will continue on.

Alright, hopefully by now you've had a chance to look at those resources. The question I asked is how can the Circle of Friends concept help overcome this challenge? Well, here is my take. For me, Circle of Friends offers learning with peers. That it's not only social and genuine in nature, but with real substance, learning, meeting objectives. Peers establish a relationship beyond a disability and ultimately those relationships build true inclusion. Let's face it, we all need and seek friends in this world. People with learning disabilities or physical, or cognitive disabilities, they're no different. No one gets somewhere without help. This is the nature of inclusion. Recognizing that understanding, and Circle of Friends is a vehicle to meet those social and learning goals.

Inclusion: what do educators think about it? Well, there's a film that I would like you to watch, and it will appear after this slide has finished. You will see three special educators, who are basically delivering their perspective concerning special education and inclusion. Now I want you to look back at what you wrote when I asked you
what you thought about inclusion. Whether it was neutral, negative, or positive. Do you remember that? You wrote that somewhere on a scrap sheet of paper. I want you to keep this in mind as you watch the video. As you listen to these three educators speak on inclusion. I need you to listen to the following terms:

- Least restrictive environment (LRE)
- Individuals with disabilities education act (IDEA)
- Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Collaboration
- Peer tutoring

Each term will be defined and discussed later. After the video, a short reflection guide will allow you to think and decide what your perspective should be or what it is when it comes to inclusion.

**Slide 11--10 minutes .20 seconds**

Video

Please follow this link and watch on youtube.com for subtitles: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OH4B4aF3KbA

Please click on the "CC" to read the subtitles for this video

**Slide 12--20 minutes .20 seconds**

So you watched the video, teachers talking about inclusion. So let's have a guided self reflection.

Thinking about inclusion in schools...there are two questions:

- When should students with special needs be included in the general education setting? Well according to these teachers, as much as possible. Based on one's LRE (Least Restricted Environment) We'll talk about that term again. Or what is deemed appropriate by the multi-disciplinarian team or IEP team. This included parents as well. Developing a student's program, for this student to be successful (this is what a multi-disciplinarian team does).

- According to these teachers, what will assist inclusion initiatives in a school? Name at least one...Learning about the students...Research strategies for these students...Becoming educated and choosing to learn...That's a big deal, and by doing that we will make a difference in a child's life. These teachers mentioned graphic organizers and team teaching and consulting with special education colleagues. Direct instructional techniques, and one of the teachers mentioned a website. I think that's a part of the research. Let's see what other professionals are saying about our class, especially about kids that have learning disabilities. This is one group in our class.

Here is the website... http://teachingld.org/ (that was mentioned) , and notice right here, teachingld, understanding ld. Then look, find research based practices and teachingld resources. Which is what we need to do. So, this is definitely a resource that we want to look at.

So let's look at our last question, how does our definition of inclusion on one of the previous slides fit the teacher exchange from the film? Well, their message was that we should have true inclusion needs a shared vision of meeting the needs of all students. If you think about the definition, that we looked at about inclusion from Marylyn Friend, you'll see that is says a belief system shared by every member of the school, a learning community often based on a mission statement emphasizing the commitment to educate all students so that they can reach their potential. The fact is, true inclusion cannot occur in a school unless the school has a shared
vision, and these people want true learning for every student. This is what I believe these three educators were talking about, and hopefully you were able to kind of spot.

**Slide 13--23 minutes .41 seconds**
Now let's take a look at terms associated again with inclusion, this one of the most important things we look at. IDEA or Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Well, let's look at how IDEA defines a child with disabilities. For IDEA, it means a child who may have cognitive impairments, hearing impairments which includes, deafness and would feature language impairments, visual impairments, serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, and then there's other health impairments. If you talk to a diagnostician you'll hear them refer to that as OHI. There's also specific learning disabilities. So, that is all included in IDEA, and we are to serve these students. So, IDEA has a long history which really began in 1975 with public law 94-142. If you talk to a special educator, they'll tell you they've heard of that many, many times. That was the education for all handicap children's act. Since then, this law has changed and merged with new laws like No Child Left Behind, concerning education reform and so forth. IDEA will continue to change and have revisions as we learn more about certain disabilities and society recognizes the value in supporting all individuals learning needs. By doing that, we facilitate a better society. For all citizens are seen as contributing members.

**Slide 14--25 minutes .35 seconds**
The basis of IDEA is for all children to receive the best education possible, and I think as teachers we can all agree on that. I mean, that's what we are...we are teachers. Well, I have one more film for you. This is entitled "Celebrating 35 Years of IDEA". Please keep two questions in mind while you watch this film.

- First, how has IDEA influence the inclusion movement?
- And then, what did schools do before IDEA?

You will have a reflection piece at the end of watching the video and answer those two questions.

**Slide 15--**
(Please read the closed caption at the bottom of the screen.)

**Slide 16--35 minutes .40 seconds**
Ok, now let's reflect on what we've learned from the film using the two questions.

- First, how has IDEA influence the inclusion movement? Well, you can say that the law recognizes people with disabilities as having a part to play in society. People with disabilities have great capabilities and can contribute to society. This is what inclusion is...everyone has value and can contribute greatly to society.
- And let's look at question 2, what did schools do before IDEA? Well, not much. Before PL94-142 or IDEA...People with disabilities were put away or segregated from the whole. Support and aid for students with special needs was limited or nonexistent at best. Students with learning or physical challenges were not included in the general education setting. Expectations for students with special needs were low, and that is really sad.

**Slide 17--36 minutes .52 seconds**
One of the recent movements regarding students with special learning needs pertains to accountability and school reform movements. Especially starting in 2004 and between 2006, IDEA merged with No Child Left Behind and had several reauthorizations. This brought the idea of having higher standards and expectations for students with disabilities. The argument is to have true inclusion then we should have expectations of all of our students. You can go and see some of our links regarding modified resources and the difference between TAKS
and Modified STAAR. Those links are right down at the bottom of the slide here. You can look at those if you go to my word document links page. Find slide 12 and click and see one of those things. The last link is a pdf, and I think you'll find it rather interesting.

**Slide 18--37 minutes .54 seconds**
Here is the website, you can see it says STAAR Modified Resources and you can click on this link right here and see the different modified curriculum in the content areas. So, I think that you would be happy if you as a new teacher looked at that and kind of see what's going on in Texas anyway.

**Slide 19--38 minutes .22 seconds**
Let's focus on one of the most important terms used in schools today, which you have already heard several times in this module. LRE (Least Restrictive Environment). Notice in our definition, LRE which is a part of IDEA, you see this right here. To the maximum extent appropriate students with disabilities are to be educated with children who are not disabled. For me, that is inclusion. That is the belief system behind inclusion, and that is why this term in particular with inclusion is so important. I want to give you an analogy, it's kind of weird, but stay with me if you don't mind. I have pictures to go with it, so maybe it will make sense.

Let's also understand that there is a difference between legalized thinking and people first thinking. So this analogy makes sense if you think of it that way. For example, when you go into a school you have people say, "that doesn't work". They'll say "they're doing it because the law told us to". Honestly if you're doing inclusion because the law tells you to, you're thinking in a legalistic manner. Inclusion will not work in your school, and here's the analogy. Let's say a hospital. Let's say in that hospital there are professionals, of course, doctors right? There's a doctor, and let's say we have a patient who is ill. Let's say that one day, there's a law that says we need to make sure that people are well. That's a good thing, right? Sounds good, people should be well. Let's say that instead of the professional, the doctor using what he knows about this patient; using what he knows about standards; using what he knows about medicine. Let's say instead of using those skills, the doctor just says "Hey you are well now! We have legalized your wellness. So go ahead and leave the hospital. You don't belong here anymore. You don't need us because we said you were well legally. " Let's say that the society there in that position is just told to leave and to go into society. There's no scaffolding, there's no support, there's no self service for this person. They are sick in society with no help now. Alright, are you getting my drift here?

Ok, let's play like there's a school and the school has students that need special services. Instead of using our knowledge of the kid's needs, we just say hey you're well. We are doing inclusion, you're well. Go out and be in the school. I'm not going to help you because you're supposed to be better. There's no support for you. Bye, bye. Do you see? That's actually happening in some schools and some people are actually using inclusion as the excuse to do that. When you can see through LRE that that is not inclusion. When we do not give our students support, we are not even following that.

So, here is what we need to think. Really in the new world, some students in our schools, who need special services, will spend most of the day in a self contained environment. For them, that is their LRE, because they need services. They need things to help them function and that is very appropriate. For some students who have special needs, they are able to be somewhere in between. They may spend part of their day with special services or they may be in the regular classroom and receiving special services with a professional there. Either way, they are receiving what they need based on what we know they need. Not on some legalized definition.
So back to our analogy again. This is what we would expect to see with people who are patients in a hospital. Some of these people are day patients. Some people need hospital care. Some people are being monitored by nurses and so forth, outside the hospital, home health and so forth... I think school is sort of like that. We need to start seeing it that way, and so if you're in a school or working in a situation where you hear that type of thinking, that legalized type of thinking, first of all that is not inclusion and inclusion will never work. That is not LRE, and you maybe can use this analogy to explain it. I don't know, maybe not. It may not be a very good one. But it's the only one I can think of right now. So, continue to go through this module and continue to think about what is LRE? What is inclusion? What does it mean for me and my school?

Slide 20--43 minutes .41 seconds
Another term that we looked at was Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Education Plan IEP again. It's a legal document that specifies the long and short-term goals of an instructional program, where the program will be delivered, who will deliver the program, and how progress will be evaluated. It's a legal document, it's very important. And today we see IEPs not only in a special education environment, but a general education environment. In other words, an inclusion environment.

Alright, one of the resources that I think that you should look at is from partnerstx.org. One of the things that they have is writing good IEPs. This Partners Resource Network is probably one of the best resources a teacher could ever look at. But I want you to look at what they say about writing good IEPs, because you will be in ARD committee, Admissions, Review, and Dismissal committee talking about kids with special needs and possibly writing IEPs.

Slide 21--44 minutes .58 seconds
So, here is what you will download, and you can also go down to the word document links page and find Slide 14 and easily pull this up. But look at that, writing good IEPs and it goes on and talks about several things. But I want to concentrate on their use of SMART. I think this is really, really fascinating! SMART is an anagram that means specific, measurable, use action words, realistic, and relevant and time-limited.

So what does that mean? Well, the S for specific means specific goals for target areas for academic achievement and functional performance. M, measurable, remember it has to be measurable. It means you can count or observe their progress in some way, and you'll see that IEPs definitely have that going on. The use of A, use of action words, I think this is neat. It basically talks about three components that must be stated and measurable items. And that is first direction of behavior. Are we increasing, decreasing, or maintaining? What is the area of need? Is it reading, writing, social skills, communication, so forth...? All of those are areas that we are responsible for and then see level of attainment. In other words, to what age level, without assistance, with assistance, what are we doing? And the R, realistic and relevant I think is really good, because SMART IEP goals are not based on district curriculum, or state or district tests, or other external standards. SMART IEPs focus on a child's learning needs, and there established in the ARD committee by the IEP team or the multi-disciplinary team. That makes it relevant and important. T, time-limited--What does the child need to know and be able to do after a specified period of time? So after so much time, what are we expecting from the student?

So take a look at these resources and everything I just read to you is actually from here. You can see it, there it is. I think it's one of the best documents, best resources that I've ever found.

Slide 20-47 minutes .25 seconds
And so again, that's from the Partners Resource Network
Alright, continuing with IEP...I want you to notice a statement from that document that I asked you to pull up. You reviewed the word document about writing good IEPs by the Partners Resource Network. Well there's a statement that says, "a statement of the date for beginning services, frequency, location, and duration of services and modifications." My question is which word is most important when considering inclusion issues for a child when developing an IEP? Take a look at that. You can pause it you want to because I'm about to give you the answer.

Alright, so here comes the answer...if you said location, then you were right. Location-this determines where a student will be served. Is the location with non-disabled peers? Inclusion is build on this one word. An IEP team or ARD committee will need to keep these restrictive environments and inclusive thinking in mind while working an IEP up and writing it up as well. Placement and location decisions are the most important when it comes to inclusion. So, we need to definitely keep that in mind.

Slide 23--49 minutes .19 seconds
If you remember the first film we watched "Perspectives on Inclusion for Special Education Teachers", the word collaboration was used several times. Teachers have a big job, a challenging one. Working together is the only way to serve and meet the diverse needs of all students. You're about to watch another film, it is entitled "Teaching Full Inclusion". It was made by two teacher who I think are rather unique and really understand the word collaboration better than anyone. I want you to think about this for a second, as you watch this video. What is needed for two teachers, one a special educator and the other a general educator, to create and maintain an inclusive atmosphere in the classroom? Now also ask yourself these two questions. What are these two teachers doing to meet the needs of all students? What are some of the inclusive practices? Maybe you witnessed this in this class. Alright, so are we ready? If you need a break, this might be a good place to take a break and then come back. You can pause, but the video is about to begin next.

Slide 24--50 minutes .43 seconds
Please click on the youtube link-- www.youtube.com/watch?v=vShPt32Mjpl
Click on the close captioning link to see the subtitles.

Slide 25--56 minutes .58 seconds
Now you've finished the film, Team Teaching Full Inclusion, and I asked you to think about this...what is needed for two teachers, one a special educator and one a general educator, to create and maintain an inclusive atmosphere in the classroom? Well, they chose to plan and work together with the focus on the objectives and the different learning needs of the children served in the classroom. This is all there is to it. I also asked you to ask yourself, what are these two teachers doing to meet the needs of all students? What are some of the inclusive practices? Maybe you noticed but they were using all learning styles. Especially the body kinesthetic learning style all valued in that way. You could tell there was multiple ways of learning and engaging. That was refreshing to see. Then what are some of the inclusive practices you witnessed in this class? I would definitely say all students following the same routines, games and activities and yet still differentiated in that way for each student. The teachers modify learning expression requirements based on each students needs and the teachers use physical movement, musical expression, recognizing the classroom as a community where each member of the class has a meaningful contribution. I think that was really shown in the "joys experience" that one of the teachers were explaining in the class. It is just a great example of that inclusive philosophy and practice. And so, we were looking at two master teachers who definitely believe in inclusion and are making it possible.
One of the best methods of establishing inclusive environments is through the use of peer tutoring. Research has found it to be a benefit for the tutor or the tutee in both social or academic areas, very beneficial. Peer tutoring is an inclusion strategy or practice of placing a same age or an older peer as a respected mentor for another peer who needs extra assistance. The peer tutor may be trained, must be of honorable character, and should be knowledgeable in the various content areas.

Marilyn Friend defined peer tutoring as "approach to peer-mediated instruction in which students are partnered, provided with instructional materials that they are to learn, and expected to help each other in accomplishing the learning goal."

Anyway you look at it, peer tutoring may be one of the best avenues for inclusion since it allows peers to lead and form relationships based on common interests and challenges presented in a classroom. Accomplishing challenges together, learning is a social process allowing partners to equaling to fully contribute to the goal of the project at hand. And the best scenario, each student has something to offer or some strength to help accomplish the project at hand. You are about to watch a film concerning peer tutoring. And although the film is from England, the ideas in research supporting peer tutoring are presented in visible and a tangible sense I believe. As you watch the video, please keep in mind the following questions...We will have a self reflection after the video has ended.

- How does peer tutoring facilitate inclusion?
- What are some of the pros and cons of using peer tutoring?

Well, as you can see peer tutoring can be an valid tool to help us in creating an inclusive environments. So let us look at these reflection questions related to the video.

First, how does peer tutoring facilitate inclusion? Well, it creates a means for school citizens, peers, to contribute to the accomplishment of a project or learning goal. Although one peer may be more mature and knowledgeable, both contribute and are rewarded in some way from the relationship build and an accomplishment of authentic real world learning goals and objectives.

And the last question is, what are some of the pros and cons of using peer tutoring? Which you can see what I think the pros and cons are. One of the pros is learning is social...all ages learn. Peer tutoring allow for expression of learning. Learning is also not only an adult thing but is a human thing for all ages. So I think that should be considered. Some of the challenges or cons, the peer tutor must have training to be most effective. This requires time and resources. Also if the relationship between the peer tutor and tutee becomes negative or with strife, learning can be compromised.

Differentiation instruction is being emphasized in schools today. In Texas in particular, diversity is a way of life and a strength, I believe. Meeting the needs of diverse learners and students. Well, this is the mission of a public school teacher. By doing so, teachers are building communities in the classroom. It's the same with
society itself. Through this next part of the module, you'll focus on differentiated instruction, and we'll learn how the RTI (response to intervention system) creates an environment for general educators to see all students differences and needs, as strengths rather than deficits.

**Slide 30--1 hour 8 minutes .39 seconds**

With the discrepancy model of thinking, a student is seen in black or white terms. The question asks, what is wrong with him, or what is wrong with her? It's like a medical model where we have to find out what's wrong with you before we help you, which, I don't believe is appropriate for education. The discrepancy model seeks a label. You have to have this or that to get help. The model sees a disability before the human being, before the person.

**Slide 31--1 hour 9 minutes .16 seconds**

Differentiation is the exact opposite of the discrepancy model. Here a teacher sees the need and strengths of a person without looking for some label. In other words, a teacher differentiates for the student, simply because the student needs to learn the objective, or learning goal, in a different way. If you look right here, you'll see what Marilyn Friend describes as differentiation. Modifying curriculum and other services to meet the specific needs of individual learners. The focus moves away from "what is wrong with you?" to "how can I help you?".

Basically, RTI (Response to Intervention) over here, is a systematic way to differentiate. So differentiation and RTI are one and the same. Helping a student, systematically, in a systematic way, without needing a diagnosis or label to help said student. For me, this is what teaching really is. This is what real teachers do anyway.

**Slide 32--1 hour 10 minutes .31 seconds**

What you are looking at here is the three-tiered system of RTI, and this is what you mostly find in Texas schools.

- **Tier 1** - is where all children are in the general education program, everyone. Whole class and small group instruction occurs from the classroom teacher.

- **Tier 2** - students are identified is maybe having trouble in tier 1. We mostly see small group instruction provided by classroom teacher and perhaps a specialist. And this is an addendum to tier 1 instruction, not a replacement.

- **Tier 3** - individualized instruction, these are student that may be having trouble with the intervention that they are experiencing in tier 2. This is generally outside the classroom and by a specialist. But it doesn't have to be. There's lots of room for compromise and work in this three-tiered system.

**Slide 33--1 hour 11 minutes .46 seconds**

Accordingly, the three-tiered system of RTI usually has this kind of population breakdown. What we see is 80%-85% of all students are served in tier 1 only. We see students in tier 2 as being maybe 10%-15% of all students, and they are still receiving instruction in tier 1. In tier 3 we see maybe around 5% that need these services, and from the students who are having trouble growing in tier 3 or are not experiencing growth in tier 3, some of them may be referred to special education services if needed.

**Slide 34--1 hour 12 minutes .47 seconds**

These links add further information and confirmation concerning the discrepancy model to differentiation and RTI type thinking, in organization in our schools and our classrooms. If you would like to see these links up close, you can also go to the word document of links and find slide 26 and see these links easily.
Slide 35--1 hour 13 minutes .14 seconds

I would like to show you one of these resources or at least a couple of them anyway. This right here is the on-track reading, which you see on your slide, discrepancy. This speaks of the discrepancy model, see how it works, and so forth. But if you look right here, the RTI one (What is the response to Intervention listed) this is the link. I think is most valuable. It talks about the RTI multi-tiered approach to learning. The RTI Action Network does a very good job explaining what that is about. But I would particularly like to draw your attention to is this right here. It talks about highly-qualified scientifically based classroom instruction. In other words, all students receive high-quality, research-based instruction in the general education classroom. This right here is calling for teachers to be professionals. In other words, you know strategies, you know best practices, and you implement those in your classroom. I think this is a positive movement for our profession. And RTI, I believe, has really helped us do that.

Another thing that you need to look at is on-going student assessment. You expect teachers to be able to assess students, and follow them and know whether students are growing or stagnant and be thinking on ways in how we can improve student performance. This is something that in the past has not really been valued in teaching and should have been. But it hasn't and now it is. And so RTI has brought that to us and helped us have a profession again there.

Right here, tiered instruction, a multi-tiered approach is used to efficiently differentiate instruction for all students. Again, RTI brings us a specific systematic way to bring research-based interventions to students, to match to students needs. That's a positive improvement in, I think, education.

And then again, parent involvement. We see that as being valued by the RTI model. Which, I believe, brings us back to IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). Which brought parents as a part of the multi-disciplinary team.

So either way you look at it, RTI (and you can read all of this from the website) we should be very pleased that it's with us. That is has a place in our profession. Because it is helping us create and continue the profession of teaching and make it something that really helps children.

Slide 36--1 hour 16 minutes .05 seconds

Now think about RTI again, and all that we have read and discussed about it. What do we know about it? Well, it is a federal mandate for schools using federal education dollars. It is a systematic method for schools to follow in order to meet old mandates set forth, I believe, by public law 94-142 or IDEA and even the current no child left behind, over the years. In other words, it is like the federal government is saying "this time we really mean it! We really want you to do what is right.". I think we should want to do what is right.

There's some focus questions I would like you to consider while you watch this film from Atlas Initiative for Public Education. That was put out in 2008 about the response to intervention. I believe it's a very good film and will really help you understand further what RTI is. The two questions that I need you to be considering is:

1. What is three tiered RTI model?
2. When and why may some students need to be referred for special education services and evaluation?

So keep that in mind as you watch the video. Let's start thinking...
Slide 28–1 hour 20 minutes .38 seconds
Now that you've completed the video, RTI, let's have our reflection.

The first focus question is what is the three tiered RTI model? Most Texas schools do use it. Well, put simply it is a systematic way to organize and make sure each student’s learning needs are considered while researched "best practices" are utilized as interventions when learning is at risk.

When and why may some students need to be referred for special education services and evaluation? Well, students who are not responding to one on one interventions offered in TIER 3 may be referred to special education services. Again, LRE (least constrictive environment) considerations are always considered as well. And should always be considered when making placement decisions concerning students.

Slide 29–1 hour 21 minutes .44 seconds
Placing the student before the disability is the key to true inclusion. Since most people are called by a name and not a role or label in society today. Person before disability is the mantra today and should be.

For example:
- My autistic student will use the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) as he changes from center to center. This is not person first! We are saying autistic first.
- What we should say perhaps is "My student with autistic challenges will use the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) as he changes from center to center." Sometimes we slip up, it's not like we're trying to disrespect people, but I think it's a habit and a way that we need to think. And I think putting the person first, in our speech and they way we communicate, is one of the first steps we take to move away from that discrepancy type thinking and move to the RTI or the differentiation approach. I believe is true teaching.

Slide 30–1 hour 23 minutes .05 seconds
When we see the person first, differentiation and RTI type thinking becomes the natural way of making instructional decisions with a student's learning styles, strengths, and needs in mind. So again, instead of what is wrong with you, we are saying what is right with you? For example, we need to stop and think about this from time to time, and by doing so, we really can make a difference. For example, (by the way that's a cartoon representation of me) instead of deficient thinking (what is wrong with you?) we are thinking what can we do here? How do you like to learn? What are your strengths so we can use them to meet your specific learning challenges. Again, this type of thinking puts the person first.

Slide 31–1 hour 21 minutes .13 seconds
Ok, what do we do now as teachers? Now we see where special education has been in history and in our schools. We see where we are moving away from a discrepancy type thinking to more of a differentiation RTI type thinking. You may ask yourself, what do I do now? How can I make a difference with all these complex ways of thinking? Where do I start as an individual teacher?
Well, if you went to a quality teacher preparation program (and you did if you went to any of our Texas A&M schools of course) you should have many ideas about what good teaching is. I will present, in the last part of this module, general ways to bring about change to differentiate and meet RTI guidelines while implementing real inclusion. So pay attention in this section, it’s very important.

**Slide 32– 1 hour 25 minutes .25 seconds**

As a new teacher, you have much on your mind. I will not spend our time covering many specific strategies. I don’t think that is what you need. The best strategies are from you anyway, ones you create. But also they are research based if they are using what we call VAK. So what is VAK? Well, it means visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. So any strategy that follows that is good. That's right! If you can create an environment where students are engaged using VAK type learning responses and experiences, then you are well on the road of success. You're bringing research based instruction and experiences to your students. All of your students.

And lastly, we need to look at something called assistive technology. We'll spend a little bit more time on that and what that is because what we are seeing now in the classroom's of today is just unheard of. Something we could not have imagined just even maybe 5 years ago. So, we'll continue on with that. So look for those examples when we move on.

**Slide 33-1 hour 26 minutes .55 seconds**

Again, take note of this. This is important. All instructional experiences which incorporate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (VAK) elements are considered to be best practices. VAK preferences are often called learning styles or sometimes just referred to as multiple intelligences, although they are actually two different things. But you're on the right track if you're thinking this way and for fun I think it would be neat for you to take a look at the learning styles inventory online. You can see the word document links page that I have for you and find slide 33.

**Slide 34--1 hour 27 minutes .40 seconds**

There you'll be able to take a learning styles inventory that I have, or kind of actually a multiple intelligence inventory. Alright, now it looks like I've already have a few completed, and I'm answering these questions over here. Like, here's one...I learn well from charts, diagrams, pictures and maps. Let me see...very much like me. I'm a visual learner, definitely. I'm sensitive to how other people think and feel. Quite like me. Then, I'm sensitive to how other people think and feel. Very like me. Then, I'm good at writing--things like stories, verse, letters, instructions...quite like me. Ok, so you see over here it's like all coming about. Linguistic, mathematical those are really the labels for the multiple intelligences set forth by Howard Gardner. It doesn't really matter, what matters is that you're looking at yourself reflecting and I think that's the key here. If we can look at ourselves, then maybe look at our students.

**Slide 35--1 hours 28 minutes .46 seconds**

So you might want to pause it here and look that up if you will and come back.

Ok, so what did you learn about yourself? Maybe you're a visual learner, maybe you're more bodily kinesthetic, maybe you're more logical mathematical. Whatever. Just, what did you learn about yourself?

Number two is how can this help me make instructional decisions for my students? Well, I will say this, if you're looking yourself and you're also looking at how your students learn, I think the combination will help you prepare and create engaging lessons that your students will enjoy. Also, if you're considering the needs of your
students, then you've already won the battle. That's what you need to do anyway. So this is just one way to do that, and I think it makes it very powerful for any teacher.

Slide 36--1 hour 29 minutes .58 seconds
Many learners today are visual learners and using graphic organizers may improve their ability to learn new and difficult concepts. If you remember the video we watched with the three teachers talking, one of the things that was mentioned to help students was graphic organizers.

So let's take a look at some graphic organizers that are available for teachers online at a web address that I have for you if you would like to pull that up yourself, you can go to my word document with the links and find slide 34 and you'll see it there. It will say graphic organizers. I'm going to show you what it looks like so that you can get a chance to see it.

Slide 37--1 hour 30 minutes .46 seconds
Alright, here are some of them...you might want to review some of these graphic organizers like Goal-Reasons Web, the Ice-Cream Cone, and Idea Wheel. I'm going to click on this and see if I can pull, oh, here it is right here. And you can see that we have animals, people...there's different ideas there. So as a teacher you may really be excited to see some of these. Like here's what we call a flow chart, just a generic flow chart, and so all of them have their place in our classroom. These definitely would be a great help to a visual learner.

Slide 38--1 hour 31 minutes .29 seconds
What I'd like for you to do is, after you look at these graphic organizers, I would like you to think about what were your favorites. And why? Think about how they would help a person who is visual, to understand a concept or actually be able to learn a concept just by the graphic organizer breaking it apart and making it easier to evaluate the information, again, visually.

Slide 39--1 hour 32 minutes .01 seconds
We forget at times that we have learners who enjoy auditory learning over some of the other preferences. Nelson, from Utah Valley University offer several suggestions to classroom teachers at the University's webpage is shown on this title slide right here, and you'll see this if you go to my word document with links and look for slide 35, you'll be able to pull this up.

Slide 40--1 hour 32 minutes .30 seconds
I'm going to pull this up so that you can see it. It talks about auditory learners and even mentions ipod's and technology but here is some helpful hints she has...for a teacher who has a student whose preference may be auditory learning. So, take a look at those as a new teacher, I know that you'll find those valuable. So after reviewing several of these auditory type strategies from the link above here in this slide, what are some of your favorites? Why? Ask yourself that always.

Slide 41--1 hour 33 minutes .08 seconds
Unfortunately, Kinesthetic learners are often neglected in schools. It is more difficult to organize and plan these types of experiences at times. But if a teacher thinks about it, chooses to do this, the rewards in learning are immense. You're about to watch a film after this slide about learning styles. I would like you to listen to the first part, in particular, of the video about kinesthetic learners. After reviewing several kinesthetic strategies from the link above, what are some of your favorites? Why? That sounds familiar, doesn't it? After this film, I will not come back to these questions. So, I'm just letting you watch it and you can see what you would like to get
out of it. The video actually includes auditory and visual learning strategies as well. If you would like to complete the whole film, you're welcome to and garner more strategies as you wish. So, the film's about to play...

**Slide 42 -- 1 hour 34 minutes .20 seconds**

Please go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNxCporOofo and click on the closed captioning button to read the subtitles in the video.

**Slide 43 -- 1 hour 39 minutes .06 seconds**

As a child who needed special services, I have to say, for me assistive technology was a savior. The word processor and other tools helped me compensate for my weaknesses in learning. Today, assistive technology is readily found in schools and is a natural form of learning for all students. Not only disabled and nondisabled alike. So for me, inclusion goes hand in hand with assistive technology. Technology, again, is not a magic cure all. However, assistive technology may provide an opportunity for students with learning challenges to engage in learning and expressions of learning once deemed impossible when only using traditional learning methods and resources.

Assistive technology defined by IDEA, "Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability."

**Slide 44 -- 1 hour 40 minutes .25 seconds**

I want to apologize for the small print, I'm just noticing that now, but we're looking at Texas Education Code here. It was written into law by the Texas Legislature in 1995, and looks like it was the 74th Legislature. It's called Chapter 260, Section 1, and it was effective May 30, 1995. Ok, there it is. This is about the transfer of the Assistive Technology devices, and I want you to notice the red part right here.

**Slide 45 -- 1 hour 41 minutes .00 seconds**

Any assistive technology device may follow a student from school district to another school district if the device is crucial to the needed differentiation and learning needs of said student. This illustrates the commitment Texas has to quality education for all students and Texas recognizes the importance of assistive technology in helping students overcome learning disabilities, physical challenges, whatever...and so I'm very proud of Texas because of this. I wanted you as a new teacher here in Texas to look at that and know that this is something that is expected in our state.

**Slide 46 -- 1 hour 41 minutes .52 seconds**

Like any strategy, tool, or resource used in the classroom there are pros and cons of course. We must consider everything before implementing assistive technology. Remember assistive technology is not a cure-all. Assistive technology, like anything, must be evaluated by its function and usefulness. On the video your about to watch, we'll see an example. Her name is Ellen. She's a student who has cerebral palsy. She is in a wheelchair and uses several assistive technological devices. Let's listen to her tell us about using assistive technology. No one is more of an expert than Ellen.

Things to consider with Ellen...
- What are some of her challenges and setbacks using this AT? What can you infer?
• What may be one inclusion aspect of her academic learning that may be accomplished or aided by the AT she explained in the interview?

• What are some of the possible concerns Ellen's parents might have with her placement in regular education classrooms?

So the video is about to pop up.

**Slide 47-- 1 hour 43 minutes .18 seconds**

Please go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAdEOXD9Tvk> and click on the closed captioning button to read the subtitles in the video.

**Slide 48--1 hour 48 minutes .58 seconds**

Well, the video has ended. You are now going to reflect and have a little Q&A. we are going to talk about Ellen. I asked you to consider things about Ellen before the video and one of them was..

What are some of her challenges and setbacks using this AT for her? To a degree, most definitely, the communication can be slow and cumbersome if using for long periods of time. That can be an issue I noticed.

What may be one inclusion aspect of her academic learning that may be accomplished or aided by the AT she explained in the interview? I think the simple fact that she is able to move around the school on her own and is able to communicate with peers = Inclusion. Academically we have to express ourselves and this is a way that she can do that through assistive technology. So definitely that meets social and academic ways.

The last one is what are some of the possible concerns Ellen's parents might have with her placement in regular education classrooms? I think of questions as a parent and I believe that these are questions that parents would ask. Will she be able to move around safely at the school? While she uses the computer aided communication devices with peers and teachers, will she be heard and understood like others in the classroom? So, those are all valid questions that I believe they would ask. And perhaps you’d ask some different ones, but this is my thinking anyway.

**Slide 49--1 hour 50 minutes .46 seconds**

As we leave our reflection concerning assistive technology, again, I want to emphasize that AT cannot and never will a cure-all magic type device or experience. Assistive technology is great and help make inclusion a reality for many students with numerous disabilities. But remember, AT comes with pros and cons and these must be considered before implementing any assistive technological device. It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of any AT before it is implementation with a child with physical or learning challenges or both.

Alright, I have a website I'd like to visit. It's a link in edutopia and this is an article I thought was fascinating. It was written by a Uray Wellington. A technologist at a elementary school. This was written in 1998 when assistive technology was just beginning. It's filled with success stories and I think if you would go to my links document word page, you can find slide 42 and you'll be able to click on this web link in edutopia. Read several success stories. As a matter of fact, I would like to show you some, but before I do that , I want you as you look at these, I want you to ask yourself what are some of the challenges for this for students with special needs? What are some of the challenges their teachers will face while they facilitate the purchase, implementation, and use of AT?
Slide 50--1 hour 52 minutes .48 seconds
So here is the website. This is edutopia right here. You can see here's Elijah right here, and talks about him using interactive phonics there. It goes on to talk about Taba with writing with her voice, in the 3rd grade nine year old there. I think this is Camille and lessons learned. So there are three for you to look at, and I would like to see what you think about all those. Just for your own curiosity.

Slide 51 and 52--1 hour 53 minutes .40 seconds
Well, we've learned so much. A lot right? Here are a few things to remember.
- Inclusion is a philosophy in action in most public schools today.
- Inclusion requires teachers and students to be problem solvers.
- RTI and its emphasis on differentiation are essential practices for general educators.
- Students with special needs need the general and special educators to work as a team.
- Ultimately best practices always include VAK instructional experiences.
- AT tools are one of the best ways to help students with special needs remain in the general education setting.

Slide 53--1 hour 54 minutes .42 seconds
And here are my references. The following are references citing APA 6th edition. I want to thank you for working through this module. I wish you well as you begin your career as a new teacher. Remember no one has all the answers, I know I do not. We work and problem solve together with students interests and needs first always! People first! This attitude will bring you closer to inclusive practices in your classroom. Also students with special learning needs will become your students not someone else's. Students you invest your time in and your energy into helping, the rewards are great for a real teacher. I will leave it at that. So my request is please become a real teacher. We need you, we need you now more than ever!

For more information and ideas, see my webpage...at learningwithjamesgentry.com. I also have some teacher links for you to look at. That's that second website you see right here. I'm very glad that I was able to me you. Please take advantage of these resources. I think you'll find several things that would be of interest to you, and I think you'll be able to find something there that maybe you've never seen before. So enjoy! And if you would like to see this site on the word document, I believe it's on my word page slide 46. So check that out as well. Ok, that is the end and I will hopefully hear good things about inclusion and RTI and Assistive Technology and so on and so forth from you guys as you continue on with your careers.